

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



## State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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### **GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES *LEARN AND EARN* NAMED AMONG HARVARD'S TOP 50 INNOVATIONS IN GOVERNMENT**

**RALEIGH** – Governor Mike Easley today announced that North Carolina's *Learn and Earn* Initiative has been named among the top 50 programs in the 2008 Innovations in American Government Awards competition sponsored by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy School. The program was selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 applicants to represent the best in government innovation from local, county, city, tribal, state and federal levels. The top finalists will be announced in June and will compete for a \$100,000 award.

"I am proud that North Carolina is leading the way in education innovation in America by changing the way we deliver courses, making high school more relevant and giving students a chance to earn a college degree debt-free," Easley said. "Thanks to the partnerships among the General Assembly and business and education leaders across the state, *Learn and Earn*, *Learn and Earn Online* and the EARN grants are bridging the gap between high school and college to prepare all students to succeed in the global economy."

Easley's *Learn and Earn* Initiative includes three programs to increase the number of high school graduates who are college and work-ready. *Learn and Earn* early college high schools allow students to jump-start their college education. These 42 schools are located on a college or university campus and allow students to take college courses, tuition free. After no more than five years of study, students earn a high school diploma and two years of college credit or an associate's degree. The governor's *Learn and Earn* high schools have been featured on the the *CBS Evening News* and in *Newsweek* magazine and *The Chicago Tribune*.

*Learn and Earn Online* allows qualified high school students in all of North Carolina's public high schools to take online college-credit courses for free. As with *Learn and Earn* high schools, students can earn both high school and college credit for completed courses. This opportunity allows students to earn a community college associate degree, or obtain two years of transferable credit to any state university by the time they graduate high school. Access to these courses is provided both during the school day and in the evenings.

The EARN (Education Access Rewards North Carolina) Grants join with other forms of assistance (such as federal Pell Grants) to replace the need for student loans. When fully-implemented, the EARN grants will provide 25,000 students from families earning 200 percent of the poverty level or below \$4,000 a year in assistance for two years. Students receiving the grant will be required to keep their grades up and pay some